



Wray Landon, INL, and Kerry Martin, Portage, celebrate the success of their Mentor Protégé agreement; Landon supported Portage as it assumed new roles and responsibilities at the lab.

Portage graduates from Mentor-Protégé program

By [Stacey Francis](#), INL Small Business Program Manager

Idaho National Laboratory is pleased to announce that Portage, Inc., a small business located in Idaho Falls, has graduated from Battelle Energy Alliance's Mentor-Protégé program.

INL and Portage signed a mentor-protégé agreement in 2007 to focus on improving Portage's capabilities in the areas of engineering, project management, nuclear operations and environmental services. Together, the team identified areas of need within INL that matched Portage's developmental goals.

Wray Landon, INL Applied Engineering and Quality Assurance deputy director, played a key role as the "INL champion." He generated interest among INL programs to match the lab's scope to Portage's developmental objectives and to generate INL commitment to the program.

"Programs needed to commit to releasing their work to Portage on a task basis while knowing they would have to mentor Portage to ensure the task could be completed," Landon said. "Fortunately for me, I had a task that I desperately needed completed and seemed achievable with a commitment to mentoring. This allowed me to set the example. The fact that Portage completed this task very successfully provided the example needed to build relationships with others at INL."

Other organizations at INL also benefited from the relationship with Portage. In 2009, BEA made the decision to outsource the chemical management program and determined this would be an opportunity for Portage, as the company's protégé, to develop a marketable capability.

Scott Lee, INL Regulatory and Monitoring Services manager, said the mentor-protégé agreement allowed BEA to fulfill a critical need for the lab while helping expand Portage's capabilities. "We didn't look at this as a staff augmentation contract, but instead, created a task that would create mentoring opportunities and help assist Portage in growing a new capability. Portage is an integral part of the process to manage, process and dispose of chemicals at INL."

Lee said INL is saving an estimated \$350,000 annually through Portage's management of the INL Chemical Management Program.

According to Landon, the relationship with Portage has been successful due to the commitment of Portage to consistently apply strong performers and management attention to the outcomes of the tasks. Portage has built depth in its staff by committing potential players to training and mentoring.

"Through the mentor-protégé agreement, the image of Portage as primarily a provider of staff augmentation resources has been changed," Landon said. "The agreement provided the venue to perfect and demonstrate their ability to perform successfully on INL task-based work."

Kerry Martin, Idaho Operations manager for Portage, says the mentor-protégé relationship allowed Portage to expand its core capabilities, shifting from primarily supporting cleanup and closure missions to developing capabilities that allow Portage to provide long-term support to the INL mission, putting the company in a stronger position going forward.

"Portage will continue to partner with INL to support the areas where the mentor-protégé agreement has helped us develop relationships," Martin says. "In addition, Portage will pursue work throughout the industry in our newly expanded capabilities."

In 2010, INL was recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as Mentor of the Year for its work with Portage under the DOE's Mentor-Protégé Program. The program encourages facility management contractors who qualify to enter into agreements with eligible small, disadvantaged businesses as protégé firms to provide appropriate developmental assistance to enhance the business and technical capabilities of small disadvantaged businesses to perform as contractors, subcontractor and suppliers.



Portage receives an award commemorating its achievement through INL's Mentor Protégé program.

